

CLAIMS:

1. A method of blasting or breaking rock or other materials by means of pressure / shock waves generated in a tamped drill hole, the method

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forming a stemming plug by holding a stemming material in a container at a predetermined spacing from a surface by means of a frangible spacer abutting said surface and corresponding to said predetermined spacing and being connected to the container, the container and the spacer forming a sacrificial

10 blasting accessory;

locating a pressure generating or shock wave generating substance adjacent the container remote from said surface;

initiating said pressure generating or shock wave generating substance to cause the stemming material to be displaced at speed toward said surface.

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2. A method of blasting or breaking rock or other materials as claimed in Claim 1 in which the pressure or shock waves are generated by an explosive proper.

20 3. A method of blasting or breaking rock or other materials as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2 in which the container is closeable and has a defined volume for containing a correspondingly defined volume of stemming material.

25 4. A method of blasting or breaking rock or other materials as claimed in any one of Claim 1 to Claim 3 inclusive which is performed in a drill hole which extends downwardly, in which the blasting accessory has a profile slightly smaller than a diameter of the drill hole, the method including causing the blasting accessory to fall under gravity toward said surface.

30 5. A method of blasting or breaking rock or other materials as claimed in any one of Claim 1 to Claim 4 inclusive, in which a dilatable seal formation is

provided in conjunction with the container, the method including dilating the seal formation to block the drill hole when the seal formation is in position, and locating a pressure or shock wave generating substance at said position in the drill hole.

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6. A method of blasting or breaking rock or other materials as claimed in Claim 5 in which the seal formation is in the form of an inverted skirt, the method including flaring the skirt to cause sealing by pressure exerted by or via the pressure or shock wave generating substance.

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7. A method of blasting or breaking rock or other materials as claimed in any one of Claim 1 to Claim 6 inclusive, which includes adjusting an effective length of the spacer in accordance with a desired spacing from said surface.

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8. A blasting accessory suitable for use in a drill hole, the accessory including

a container which is closable for holding a predetermined volume of stemming material in the form of a plug;

20 a spacer proximate the container and extending away from the container a predetermined distance, the spacer having a free end remote from the container for abutting a surface in use.

9. A blasting accessory as claimed in Claim 8 in which the container includes an openable and closable closure.

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10. A blasting accessory as claimed in Claim 8 or Claim 9 which is round and which has a profile which is of a predetermined diameter commensurate with a diameter of a drill hole for which the accessory is intended.

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11. A blasting accessory as claimed in Claim 9 or Claim 10 which is of generally round tubular shape, the spacer being in the form of a tube having an open free end, and a vent hole remote from the free end.

5 12. A blasting accessory as claimed in Claim 11 in which the container is tubular and fits spigot-socket fashion over or within an end of the spacer.

10 13. A blasting accessory as claimed in Claim 12 in which one end portion of the container is a securing end portion and is in the form of an open-ended sleeve fitting over an end of the spacer.

15 14. A blasting accessory as claimed in Claim 13 in which an opposed end portion of the container is a container end portion and is closable to hold the stemming material, the opposed end portions of the container being divided by means of an internal shoulder arranged to abut the spacer to set the depth of overlapping and thus the volume of the container.

20 15. A blasting accessory as claimed in any one of Claim 8 to Claim 14 inclusive, which includes a deformable seal formation in the form of a rim for sealing against an inner periphery of the drill hole to form a plunger for holding a pressure generating or shock wave generating substance adjacent the container remote from the spacer.

25 16. A blasting accessory as claimed in Claim 15 in which the deformable rim is in the form of an inverted skirt having longitudinal slits to render it deformable or to facilitate deformation.

17. A method of blasting or breaking rock or other materials, substantially as herein described and illustrated.

18. A blasting accessory substantially as herein described and illustrated.